Perspectives on Psychological Science

Editorial Proposal

In response to the open call:
https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/call-for-pps-proposals-2024

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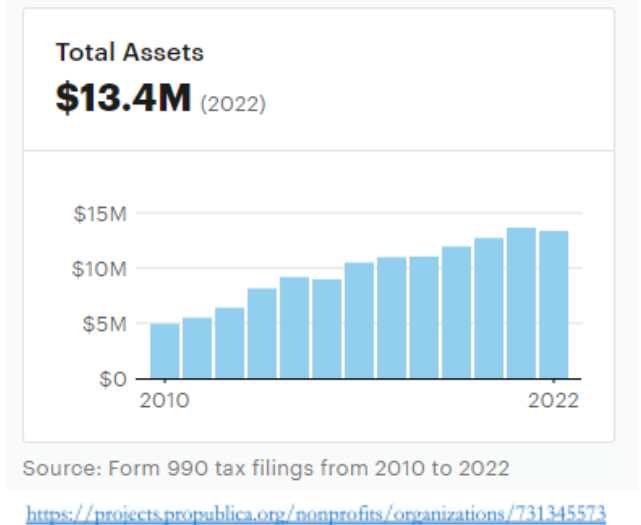
Statement of Editorial Vision

As a preface to my vision, I must state that I find this endeavor misdirected and a substantial waste of time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (henceforth *Perspectives*) has been, until only very recently, a premier outlet for diverse forms of non-empirical scholarship unlike any other in the field. Under the editorships of Bobbie Spellman and Laura King, *Perspectives* played a key role during times of crisis in the field (the replication crisis and COVID-19 + "racial reckoning," respectively). It is clear that there is no problem with the journal structure, or with handling the diverse array of content, when the journal is helmed by competent editors who understand what the role of an editor ought to be. The problems of the past were two editors who did not seem to understand the assignment and abused their power in different ways. This, to me, is not a problem with the journal structure but rather a problem with the process by which the Association for Psychological Science (APS) selected those editors. Thus, my primary proposal for the future of *Perspectives* is for APS to examine its own editorial selection process and seek to understand how it could have selected two extremely successful and two extremely unsuccessful editors in succession. Then, do whatever they did to select the successful ones, find a good editor, and carry on with the journal business.

However, that is not what you all want, I know, so while I am here I might as well propose an "innovative" structure for the future of *Perspectives*. **The only structure that could be construed as innovative within the current scientific journal climate is to convert *Perspectives* to a diamond open access journal that curates preprints based on community evaluation**. I elaborate on each of the three core aspects of my proposal, in turn.

Perspectives must be diamond open access

Diamond open access refers to journals that are free to read and access without any kind of subscription or individual payments, and free to publish in without any article-processing charges paid by authors. Free to access, free to publish.

APS positions itself as a leader in open science[1]. Indeed, they have made some nice improvements to the structure and content of *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science* and, more recently, to *Psychological Science*. At the same time, APS continues to uphold the traditional publisher-focused publication model. As many have highlighted, the current model really only exists to make profits for publishers and, in some cases, scientific societies. Justifying the traditional system because it provides funding for societies to direct to other positive uses is ethically dubious. With *Perspectives*, APS has the opportunity to put its open science values into action and have one of its six journals push against the traditional system.

Total Assets
$13.4M (2022)

Source: Form 990 tax filings from 2010 to 2022

https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/731345573

APS can afford it. In 2022, APS reported total assets of $13.4 million, an increase of 274% since 2010. I fully understand that society expenses are much more complicated than they first appear on paper, but the reality is that APS sits on a large pile of money that just keeps increasing[2]. Making *Perspectives* diamond open access would be one small step towards reinvesting those profits into the research community.

Perspectives must be preprint-forward

Preprints have rapidly become a central hub for scientific dissemination and feedback across the sciences in general, and psychology in particular. The traditional journal system in which manuscripts are kept closely guarded until a journal provides its stamp of approval 6-18 months later does not serve anyone well. Moreover, the ostensible benefits of peer review—that it screens articles for quality, ensures technical quality, and helps calibrate interpretations—are clearly not realized in practice. This does not mean that we should give up on peer review altogether, but rather that we should not use it as a strong gatekeeper for dissemination. Using a community evaluation model (see next section), *Perspectives* can organize broad feedback ("peer review") and issue endorsements of previously posted preprints. These "endorsements" would then be typeset and considered "published" in *Perspectives*, providing the CV line that many authors desire and incentive systems currently require. This process is, in essence, a version of the "publish first, curate second" model that has been advocated for in the biomedical sciences[3].

Perspectives must use a community evaluation model

As noted, APS has a history of selecting some editors who abuse their editorial powers, so one solution would be to move away from a singular person who wields such power over the journal. Rather than a single editor, *Perspectives* would have an editorial committee consisting of 8-10 people—similar to an Associate Editor team. This editorial committee would be tasked with

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[1] e.g., https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/aps-reproducibility-and-replication-initiatives.html

[2] Losses in 2022, as in some other years, notwithstanding.

[3] e.g., Stern, B. M., & O'Shea, E. K. (2019). A proposal for the future of scientific publishing in the life sciences. PLOS Biology, 17(2), e3000116. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000116

reviewing preprints nominated for consideration at the journal. These nominations could be initiated by authors themselves (akin to the traditional process of "submitting" to a journal), by members of the editorial committee, or by any member of the editorial board. The editorial committee would review the submission and vote on whether the paper should be advanced to community review based on some predetermined threshold (simple majority, two-thirds, etc.). Community review would be performed by some number of editorial board members, as well as through an open call for reviews. Review requests will emphasize that the reviews are to be pithy, focused on technical merits, clarity, and accuracy—which, it is worth noting, at least one previous successful editor at *Perspectives* emphasized. The goal would be to get a larger number of shorter, focused reviews. All reviews would be public (and anonymized, if reviewers wish it) and linked directly to the reviewed preprint. This general approach is not without precedent, as similar versions are used by ASAPbio, *Seeds of Science*, *eLife*, and *F1000Research*.

Compensation for this work is critical. I am not privy to what past EIC stipends have been, but based on my knowledge of the market, it should be at least $40,000 per year, with an additional few thousand for Associate Editors. Rather than devoting this amount to a single person, it could be spread to all members of the editorial committee equally (~$10,000 each).

Relevant Editorial Experience

I have served as Editor-in-Chief for two journals, *Infant and Child Development* (2020-2022) and *Emerging Adulthood* (2016-2020), and as an Associate Editor of *Emerging Adulthood* prior to my EIC role (2012-2016). At both journals I instituted progressive reforms aimed at promoting transparency, credibility, reproducibility, diversity, and accessibility[4,5]. I have served as a Recommender (i.e., Associate Editor) for Peer Community In Registered Reports since its launch in 2021, and am a Founder of the fledgling Peer Community in Psychology. I served as co-editor (with Kate C. McLean) of the *Oxford Handbook of Identity Development*, and as special issue editor of collections in *Journal of Social Issues*, *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, and *Identity*. More recently, I have co-edited four special issues that brought the Registered Report format to the respective journal, at *Child Development*, *Journal of Research on Personality*, *Infant and Child Development*, and *Emerging Adulthood*. At *Infant and Child Development* I organized two special issues of invited papers on "Current perspectives in developmental science," which featured articles similar to what is found in the pages of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*[6,7]. I have written several blog posts[8] related to editing, reviewing, and publishing, and am the senior author of a recent article on helping journal editors introduce open science practices[9]. In all, I would say I have a reasonable amount of editorial experience.

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[4] Syed, M. (2021). Editorial: Infant and Child Development: A journal for open, transparent, and inclusive science from prenatal through emerging adulthood. Infant and Child Development, 30(1), e2215. https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2215

[5] Syed, M. (2018). Editorial: Open science initiatives at Emerging Adulthood. Emerging Adulthood, 6(6), 371-374. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818810103

[6] Syed, M. (2022). Editorial: Current perspectives in developmental science: Introduction to the special issue. Infant and Child Development, 31(1), e2308. https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2308

[7] Syed, M. (2023). Editorial: Current perspectives in developmental science: Introduction to the 2023 special issue. Infant and Child Development, 32(6), e2479. https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2479

[8] e.g., https://getsyeducated.substack.com/p/secrets-from-the-editors-portal-or-21-08-26

[9] Silverstein, P., Elman, C., Montoya, A. K., McGillivray, B., Pennington, C. R., Harrison, C. H., … Syed, M. (2024). A guide for social science journal editors on easing into open science. Research Integrity and Peer Review, 9, 2. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-023-00141-5